



**Illinois Department
of Transportation**

THE SPRING 2007 ILLINOIS MOTORIST OPINION SURVEY

Conducted for
Illinois Department of Transportation

Conducted by



**Survey Research Office
Center for State Policy and Leadership
University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS)**

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

September, 2007

[Results Weighted by Population Distribution of IDOT Districts]

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Introduction

The Illinois Department of Transportation contracted with the Survey Research Office, located within the Center for State Policy and Leadership, of the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) to conduct a mail-out Motorist Opinion Survey in the Spring of 2007. Similar surveys had been conducted for the Department in every Spring from 2001 through 2006 and in the Fall of 2001. Staff of the UIS Survey Research Office offered advice concerning final question wording, assisted in developing the specific methodology (see below), implemented the data collection procedures (see below) and data input, and analyzed the results. A summary of the results are presented in this report.

Methodology

The sample. For the Spring 2007 survey, a stratified sample of “listed” Illinois households was purchased from Survey Sampling, Inc., one of the leading vendors of samples in the country.¹ The sample was stratified by IDOT region, with 2000 households randomly selected from District 1, and 225 from each of the other eight IDOT Districts (for a total of 1,800 outside of District 1). Thus, a grand total of 3,800 randomly-selected households were in the original sample.

It should be noted that this is basically the same methodology that has been used in all previous surveys except Spring 2002.² In that survey, both a cross-sectional sample (such as this) and a panel design (following up on those who responded in the Fall 2001 survey) were used. Because the cross-sectional portion of this design was thought to better represent licensed drivers, the original cross-sectional sampling design was selected for subsequent surveys.

Data collection procedures. Each original sample member was sent an initial survey package in mid-May, 2007.³ These initial packages consisted of a personalized letter from the Secretary of IDOT, a four-page questionnaire in booklet form, and a postage-paid return envelope addressed to the UIS-SRO in an outside envelope with the IDOT logo.⁴ About one week after this initial mailing, a postcard thank-you / reminder was sent to all sample members. And, just over two weeks after the postcard, a follow-up survey package was sent to non-respondents. This follow-up survey package was similar in composition to the first survey package.

¹ In the initial Spring 2001 survey, the sample was purchased from Survey Sampling, Inc. rather than selected from the Secretary of State’s list of licensed drivers because of time considerations. Since then, this decision has been driven by the desire to maintain consistency in this aspect of the methodology, particularly since a purpose of these surveys is to assess changes over time.

² The difference in the most recent Spring 2007 survey is the sampling of 225 households in Districts 2 through 9, up from 190 households in the previous surveys.

³ The initial survey packages were mailed May 16, 2007; postcard reminders were mailed May 23; and follow-up survey packages to non-respondents were mailed June 8-11.

⁴ The survey packages were the same as those for all the earlier surveys, with the exception of the inclusion of focus group participation forms in the Fall 2001 survey packages.

One variation used in the latest Spring 2003 through 2007 surveys is worthy of note. In the three cross-sectional surveys prior to 2003, we asked the licensed driver with the next birthday to complete the questionnaire in order to “randomly” vary the characteristics of the respondent. However, because we have difficulty in soliciting responses from the youngest licensed drivers, we have explicitly asked for the youngest licensed driver in the household to complete the survey in a random half of the sample in these most recent surveys. In all cases, we did ask that another licensed driver in the household complete the survey if the requested driver was not available.

Returns and response rate. Through August 23, 2007, over 1,400 (n = 1,413) usable surveys had been returned to the Survey Research Office. This represents about 37 percent of the sample, and is an *“initial” response rate that underestimates the actual response rate (see below for an explanation)*. The initial response rate from District 1 (the Chicago metro area) is almost 32 percent compared to just over 43 percent for the remaining districts in the state. The initial response rates from the random “next birthday” and “youngest driver” halves are nearly identical, each at about 37 percent.

We describe this as an “initial response rate” because the number of mail-out problems and the number who indicated having no licensed driver in the household have not been subtracted from the base. When these are subtracted from the base, the response rate (known as the cooperation rate) for the cross-sectional survey rises to almost 40 percent (39.4%). The cooperation rate is 33 percent for District 1 (Chicago area) and 46 percent for Districts 2 through 9 (the “downstate” regions). The cooperation rates for both the “next birthday” half and the “youngest driver” half both approach 40 percent. Relevant response and cooperation rate numbers for the total sample and by IDOT region and “sample half” are presented in Table 1 on the next page.

For the results reported in the summary below, respondents in the 2007 sample have been weighted to reflect each district’s overall estimated proportion of licensed drivers. The estimated proportions for each district used in this weighting, as in the past reports, are: District 1 - Schaumburg (58.6%); District 2 - Dixon (8.8%); District 3 – Ottawa (5.9%); District 4 - Peoria (4.8%); District 5 - Paris (5.7%); District 6 – Springfield (5.3%); District 7 - Effingham (2.7%); District 8 - Collinsville (5.5%); and District 9 - Carbondale (2.8%).⁵ Note that in this report, we have sometimes analyzed results by dividing the state into two areas, District 1 (the “Chicago area”) and Districts 2 through 9 (the “downstate” area).

The sampling error for this survey is just over +/- 2.6 percent, at the 95 percent confidence level. That is, the percentage results for the full sample will be within 2.6 percentage points of the actual population characteristics 95 percent of the time.⁶

⁵ For the weighting, the 2000 population Census figures for Illinois counties were used. However, the proportion of licensed drivers for the Chicago metro area was decreased somewhat from the population proportion because of two factors: 1) the likelihood that this area contains a higher proportion of households with no licensed driver; and 2) the likelihood that the population in this area contains a higher proportion of household members not old enough to drive. It is acknowledged that estimation is involved here; however, it should be noted that any small changes in this weighting will have no impact on the substantive results.

⁶ Note that this assumes a non-biased sampling frame and no bias in those who responded.

Table 1
Response Rates, Total
and by IDOT District and Letter Version

District	Original number	Mail problems	Not Licensed Driver / Deceased	Remaining number	Returns	“Initial” Response Rate (base: all)	Cooperation Rate (base: remaining)
1	2,000	41	49	1,910	633	31.6%	33.1%
2	225	3	10	212	102	45.3%	48.1%
3	225	4	7	214	85	37.8%	39.7%
4	225	12	5	208	99	44.0%	47.6%
5	225	8	9	208	97	43.1%	46.6%
6	225	9	8	208	104	46.2%	50.0%
7	225	7	11	207	108	48.0%	52.2%
8	225	3	11	211	93	41.3%	44.1%
9	225	10	7	208	92	40.9%	44.2%
TOTAL	3,800	97	117	3,586	1,413	37.2%	39.4%
1	2,000	41	49	1,910	633	31.6%	33.1%
2 - 9	1,800	56	68	1,676	780	43.3%	46.5%
<i>Letter version</i>							
<i>Next Birthday</i>	1,904	50	57	1,797	702	36.9%	39.1%
<i>Youngest Driver</i>	1,896	47	60	1,789	711	37.5%	39.7%

The questionnaire

The questionnaire was in the format of a four-page booklet. It contained questions that have been part of the survey since its inception, and as usual, it contained sections consisting of topical issue questions.

Continuing questions are found in the first and last parts of the questionnaire.

In the first part of the questionnaire (pages 1 and 2), respondents were asked to rate various aspects of state highways and bridges under three main headings: maintaining highways and traffic flow; road repair and construction; and traveler services. Respondents were then asked about their awareness and use of the IDOT toll-free telephone number and website. And following this, they were asked to rate IDOT employees on four characteristics and to give a couple overall evaluations of IDOT (overall performance and frequency IDOT can be trusted to do what is right regarding transportation issues) as well as to assess IDOT's impact on their area's economy and overall quality of life.⁷

In the last part of the questionnaire (bottom of page 4), respondents were asked selected “objective background” information. These included questions about the

⁷ The trust question was first asked in the Spring 2005 survey and was also asked in 2006. The assessed impact questions were asked in the Spring 2005 survey but not in 2006.

number of miles respondents drive per year (in total and on their job), commuting time and miles, and residential location as well as information regarding the respondents' age, gender, education level and household income.

This year's topical issue questions included: ratings on selected characteristics, considering "tax dollars spent" (page 3); satisfaction with selected highway-related services (page 3); priorities regarding transportation improvements (page 3); perceptions of traffic congestion on IDOT-maintained highways/roads in respondents' area (page 3); evaluations of ways to deal with congestion (page 4); and assessments of the influence various sources have on the respondents' overall of IDOT (page 4).

Description of the responding sample

The following presents a description of the sample in terms of selected demographics asked about in the questionnaire and offers comparisons between the demographics obtained when asking for "the youngest licensed driver" and when asking for "the driver with the next birthday."

As with the substantive results, this description is based on results weighted by IDOT district. (See Table 2A for a summary.) It should be noted that throughout most of this report, percentages have been rounded to integers.⁸ (Rounding may result in percentages not adding exactly to 100%.)

Gender. For those responding sample members (97% of the total sample), more than half (57%) indicated being male while the remaining 43 percent indicated being female. The proportion of males is greater in the "regular" half (the "next birthday" half) of the sample than for the "youngest driver" half (61% vs. 52%).

Age. The average age of respondents in the total sample is 56 to 57 years old (mean = 56.1 years; median = 57.0 years). Just over one-quarter (26%) of the respondents are in the two youngest age groups, split between those 16 to 35 years of age (12%) and those 36 to 45 years of age (14%). Between one in four one in five are in each of the next two age groups: 46 to 55 (21%) and 56 to 65 (23%). Thirty percent (30%) are in the two oldest age categories, split between those 66 to 75 (18%) and those over 75 (12%).

Asking for the "youngest licensed driver" did increase the number of those in the youngest age category -- with 15 percent of the random "youngest driver" half being 16 to 35 years old compared to 10 percent for the "regular" ("next birthday") half. It also decreased the number of those in the two oldest age categories -- with 26 percent of the random "youngest driver" half being over 65 years of age compared to 34 percent for the "regular" ("next birthday") half.

⁸ Numbers with decimals of .5 are rounded to the even integer.

Table 2A
Selected Demographic Characteristics
of Spring 2007 Sample

Characteristic	Total Sample	Random Half Asked for Youngest Driver	Random Half Asked for Next Birthday
Gender			
Male	57%	52%	61%
Female	43%	47%	39%
<i>(based on 97%)</i>		(1 transgender)	
Age			
16 to 35	12%	15%	10%
36 to 45	14%	13%	15%
46 to 55	21%	21%	21%
56 to 65	23%	25%	21%
66 to 75	18%	15%	20%
Over 75	12%	11%	14%
Mean	56.1 yrs	54.8 yrs	57.4 yrs
Median	57.0 yrs	56.0 yrs	58.0 yrs
<i>(based on 96%)</i>			
Education			
Up to HS	28%	28%	27%
Post HS	33%	34%	32%
4-yr college	39%	38%	40%
<i>(based on 96%)</i>			
Income			
< \$25,000	12%	15%	10%
\$25-49,000	26%	24%	27%
\$50-74,000	23%	26%	20%
\$75-100,000	19%	16%	21%
> \$100,000	20%	19%	21%
<i>(based on 85%)</i>			
Miles drive / year			
Up to 6,000*	19%	20%	18%
6,000-12,000	33%	35%	31%
12-20,000	32%	29%	35%
Over 20,000	15%	15%	15%
Mean	15,205 miles	14,578 miles	15,833 miles
Median	12,000 miles	12,000 miles	13,000 miles
<i>(based on 86%)</i>			

*Among those who indicated any driving miles. About one in seven either did not answer the question or gave "0" miles.

(table continued on next page)

Table 2A (continued)

Characteristic	Total Sample	Random Half Asked for Youngest Driver	Random Half Asked for Next Birthday
Residential location			
City of Chicago	12%	10%	13%
Chicago suburbs	37%	39%	36%
Metro East	3%	2%	3%
City > 75,000	8%	8%	7%
City 20-75,000	10%	9%	10%
City/town 10-20,000	8%	8%	8%
Town < 10,000	14%	14%	13%
Rural	10%	10%	10%
<i>(based on 94%)</i>			
Miles drive on job / year			
% giving number	35%	35%	36%
<i>Of these:</i>			
1 to 100	8%	10%	6%
101 to 1000	23%	25%	20%
1001 to 5000	19%	16%	21%
5001 to 12,000	21%	22%	21%
Over 12,000	29%	27%	31%
Median	5,731	5,000	6,632
Commuting			
% giving answer	58%	60-61%	56-57%
<i>Of these:</i>			
avg miles one way to work	Median = 14.0	Median = 15.0	Median = 13.0
avg minutes to work	Median = 30.0	Median = 26.6	Median = 30.0
avg minutes home from work	Median = 30.0	Median = 30.0	Median = 30.0

Driving-related descriptions. Miles drive per year. The median number of miles respondents drive per year is 12,000 miles while the mean number is somewhat higher, at just over 15,200.⁹ Nearly one in five (19%) reported driving up to 6,000 miles per year; about one-third each reported driving 6,000+ to 12,000 miles per year (33%) and 12,000+ to 20,000 miles year (32%); and 15 percent reported driving more than 20,000 miles per year.

⁹ These results are based on the 90 percent of respondents who gave any miles per year.

Both the mean and median number of miles driven per year are greater for the “regular half” sample than for the “youngest half” sample (13,000 vs. 12,000 for median miles; about 15,800 vs. 14,600 miles for mean miles).

Miles drive on job per year. Just over one-third (35%) reported mileage for miles they drive on their job per year (not including commuting). *For these respondents*, the median number of miles that was reported is just over 5,700. Just over three in ten (31%) of these respondents reported driving 1,000 miles or less per year; fairly similar percentages reported driving each of the next two mileage categories -- 1,001 to 5,000 miles (19%) and 5,001 to 12,001 miles (21%); and almost three in ten reported driving more than 12,000 miles (29%).

The median number of miles driven per year for their job is larger for the “regular sample” half (just over 6,600 reported by 36%) than for the “youngest sample” half (5,000 miles reported by 35%).

Commuting. When asked about the miles and minutes of their commute to/from work, nearly six in ten of the respondents (about 58%) reported information. The median number of miles these respondents reported being from work is 14 miles. The median number of minutes it takes to get to work, and also back from work, is 30 minutes – for a total median commute time of one hour (60 minutes). The associated mean numbers are somewhat greater, reflecting the fact that there are some respondents at the higher ends of each distance/time period that “pull” the average numbers up from the median.

Somewhat more of the “youngest driver” half gave commuting information than did the “regular” half (60-61% vs. 56-57%), a result expected because of the older composition of the “regular” half group. For those who did, there are only small differences in the commuting miles and time reported. For instance, the “youngest” half reported a somewhat longer commute in terms of miles (median of 15 miles vs. 13 miles for the “regular” half) but a somewhat shorter commute in terms of minutes (median of nearly 57 minutes total commute time for the “youngest” half vs. 60 minutes for the “regular” half).

Residential location. Almost half (49%) of the “weighted” respondents reported living in the two listed metro Chicago areas, with 12 percent indicating they live in the City of Chicago and 37 percent indicating they live in the Chicago suburbs.¹⁰ Proportions around one in ten reported living in five other listed areas: a city of more than 75,000 (8%); a city of 20,000 to 75,000 (10%); a city/town of 10,000 to 19,999 (8%); a city/town/village less than 10,000 (14%); and a rural area (10%). Less than one in twenty (3%) reported living in the Metro East area.

Overall, residential location is quite similar for both the “youngest” and “regular” samples. The biggest differences here are the slightly greater proportion of the “youngest driver” respondents who live in the Chicago suburbs (39% vs. 36% for the

¹⁰ See the description of weighting in the Methodology section. Note that 17 percent of those in District One reported living in the City of Chicago, over 60 percent (64%) reported living in the Chicago suburbs, and 19 percent reported another type of area.

“regular half”) and the slightly greater proportion of the “regular half” respondents who live in the City of Chicago (13% vs. 10% for the “youngest driver” half).

Education. Almost three in ten (28%) of the respondents have up to a high school diploma or GED as their highest level of education while about one-third (33%) have some post high school education and nearly four in ten (39%) have a four-year college degree.

These results differ only slightly between the “youngest driver” and “regular” sample halves.

Income. The median household income of respondents is in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 range, with the best estimate being somewhat more than \$60,000 (about \$63,050).¹¹ About 12 percent of all responding households have incomes less than \$25,000 a year, and fairly equal proportions of about one-quarter reported incomes between \$25,000 and \$49,999 a year (26%) and \$50,000 to \$74,999 a year (23%). The remaining respondents are basically split between those in households with incomes between \$75,000 and \$100,000 a year (19%) and those in households with incomes of more than \$100,000 a year (20%).

Overall, the differences in the income level distributions between the “youngest driver” half and the “regular” half are not substantial. However, generally higher levels of household income are reported by the “regular” sample half than by the “youngest driver” half. For instance, the estimated median household income is \$66,250 for the “regular half” compared to \$60,577 for the “youngest driver” half. For the “regular” half, 10 percent reported household incomes in the lowest income category (less than \$25,000) and 42 percent reported household incomes in the two highest income categories (representing \$75,000 and up). Respective percentages for the “youngest driver” half are 15 percent and 35 percent, respectively.

Summary of differences between the “youngest driver” and “next birthday” sample groups, and differences with past surveys. Two demographic characteristics stand out in terms of differences between the “youngest driver” and “next birthday” sample groups.¹² First, and not surprisingly, is age of the respondent, with the “youngest driver” group being somewhat younger than the “next birthday” group. Second, there is a significant difference for gender, with the “youngest driver” group having fewer males and more females than the “next birthday” group. Other differences are less in magnitude and/or apparent substantive significance.

Comparisons of the 2007 respondent portrait with recent past years. A comparison of selected response and demographic characteristics from survey years 2003 through 2007 is found in Table 2B. The highest response rate across the five years is found for the 2003 survey at 44 percent with a drop to about 40 percent in both 2004

¹¹ This estimate is based on interpolation and assumes that respondents with incomes in this interval are equally dispersed across it.

¹² These differences, which make the “youngest driver” group more representative of the total licensed drivers -- combined with virtually no difference in the response rates of the two sample groups -- is an argument for using only the “youngest driver” letter in the next Motorist survey.

and 2005 and then a slight decline to just over 39 percent in both 2006 and 2007. (The same methodology was employed in each of these years, including the use of two versions of the letter, one asking for the youngest licensed driver and the other asking for the licensed driver with the next birthday.)

For the demographic characteristics presented, the biggest changes over the five years occur for household income and for age of the respondent.

For household income, the percent who are in households with incomes under \$50,000 per year decreases from 46 percent and 48 percent in 2003 and 2004, respectively, to about 40 percent in 2005 and 2006 to 38 percent in 2007. At the same time, the percent who are in households earning \$75,000 and up increases from about 30 percent in 2003 and 2004 to about one-third in 2005 and 2006 to 39 percent in 2007.

For age of respondent, the median age has risen from 53 years in 2003 and 2004, to 54 years in 2005, 55 years in 2006 and 57 years in 2007 while the mean age shows consistent increases across the survey years. The proportion of respondents who are 45 years or younger has decreased from 35 percent in 2003, to one-third in 2004 and 2005, to 29 percent in 2006 and to 26 percent in 2007. At the same time, the proportion who are 66 years and older has increased from about one-quarter in 2003, 2004 and 2005 to 28 percent in 2006 and 30 percent in 2007. A small increase has occurred in proportion who are 56 to 65 years of age (19% to 23% across the five-year span) while the proportion who are 46 to 55 years has been quite stable (20% - 22%, with no consistent trend).

Much smaller changes are evident for education level, with the 2005 to 2007 respondents having a slightly higher education level overall than did the 2003 and 2004 respondents. The proportion who are males (females) shows no consistent trend, ranging from a low of 54 percent (high of 46%) in 2006 and a high of 57% (low of 43%) in 2004 and 2007. The proportions of respondents in each of the types of residential locations are overall also quite stable.

In each of the survey years, the median miles driven per year by respondents is 12,000 miles while the reported total commute time (to and from work) for relevant respondents has increased from 50 minutes and 47 minutes in 2004 and 2005, respectively, to 55 minutes in 2006 and 60 minutes in 2007.

Table 2B
Selected Response and Demographic Characteristics, 2003 to 2007

Characteristic	2007 Sample	2006 Sample	2005 Sample	2004 Sample	2003 Sample
Cooperation rate	39.4%	39.4%	40.1%	40.4%	44.3%
Gender					
Male	57%	54%	56%	57%	55%
Female	43%	46%	44%	43%	45%
	(97%)	(98%)	(98%)	(98%)	(98%)
Age					
16 to 35	12%	13%	15%	15%	16%
36 to 45	14%	16%	18%	18%	19%
46 to 55	21%	22%	20%	22%	21%
56 to 65	23%	22%	21%	19%	19%
66 to 75	18%	15%	15%	15%	13%
Over 75	12%	13%	11%	11%	12%
Mean	56.1 yrs	55.0 yrs	53.9 yrs	53.4 yrs	53.2 yrs
Median	57.0 yrs	55.0 yrs	54.0 yrs	53.0 yrs	53.0 yrs
	(96%)	(96%)	(96%)	(97%)	(97%)
Education					
Up to HS	28%	28%	29%	33%	32%
Post HS	33%	32%	32%	30%	30%
4-yr college	39%	39%	39%	38%	37%
	(96%)	(97%)	(97%)	(96%)	(98%)
Income					
< \$25,000	12%	13%	14%	17%	16%
\$25-49,999	26%	27%	27%	31%	30%
\$50-74,999	23%	26%	25%	22%	23%
\$75-100,000	19%	16%	16%	14%	15%
> \$100,000	20%	17%	18%	17%	15%
	(85%)	(85%)	(85%)	(83%)	(88%)
Up to \$49,999	38%	40%	41%	48%	46%
\$50-74,999	23%	26%	25%	22%	23%
\$75,000 and up	39%	33%	34%	31%	30%
Miles drive / yr					
Up to 6,000*	19%	23%	19%	20%	21%
6,000+ -12,000	33%	36%	33%	36%	38%
12,000+ - 20,000	32%	28%	31%	29%	28%
Over 20,000	15%	13%	16%	16%	14%
Mean	15,205 miles	14,045 miles	15,244 miles	14,795 miles	14,459 m (est)
Median	12,000 miles	12,000 miles	12,000 miles	12,000 miles	12,000 m (est)
	(86%)	(90%)	(90%)	(88%)	(94%)

*Among those who indicated any driving miles. The results in the 2003 report were re-calculated to make this consistent.

(continued on next page)

Table 2B (continued)

Characteristic	2007 Sample	2006 Sample	2005 Sample	2004 Sample	2003 Sample
Residential location					
City of Chicago	12%	10%	12%	11%	<i>not comp*</i>
Chicago suburbs	37%	38%	34%	36%	<i>not comp</i>
Metro East	3%	3%	3%	3%	<i>not comp</i>
City > 75,000	8%	8%	6%	8%	<i>not comp</i>
City 20-75,000	10%	10%	12%	10%	<i>not comp</i>
City/town 10-20,000	8%	8%	8%	10%	<i>not comp</i>
Town < 10,000	14%	13%	13%	11%	<i>not comp</i>
Rural	10%	9%	10%	11%	<i>not comp</i>
	(94%)	(96%)	(96%)	(95%)	
Miles drive on job / yr					
% giving number	35%	42%	42%	42%	
Of these:					
1 to 100	8%	9%	8%	5%	<i>na*</i>
101 to 1000	23%	20%	20%	22%	<i>na</i>
1001 to 5000	19%	23%	24%	27%	<i>na</i>
5001 to 12,000	21%	26%	24%	24%	<i>na</i>
Over 12,000	29%	22%	24%	23%	<i>na</i>
Median	5,731	5,000	5,000	5,000	<i>na</i>
Commuting					
% giving answer	58%	53-54%	62%	63%	
Of these:					
avg miles one way to work	Mean = 18.2 Med = 14.0	Mean = 18.4 Med = 14.2	Mean = 17.0 Med = 12.0	Mean = 16.8 Med = 13.0	<i>na</i>
avg minutes to work	Mean = 31.7 Med = 30.0	Mean = 30.2 Med = 25.0	Mean = 28.1 Med = 22.0	Mean = 30.0 Med = 25.0	<i>na</i>
avg minutes home from work	Mean = 35.7 Med = 30.0	Mean = 31.1 Med = 30.0	Mean = 30.8 Med = 25.0	Mean = 32.9 Med = 25.0	<i>na</i>
avg minutes total commute (adding avgs for above)	Mean = 67.4 Med = 60.0	Mean = 61.3 Med = 55.0	Mean = 58.9 Med = 47.0	Mean = 62.9 Med = 50.0	<i>na</i>

*"not comp" indicates that the residential location question did not produce comparable data in 2003.

"na" indicates that the information is not contained in the 2003 report.

A SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The following pages summarize the final results. For the Spring 2007 survey, we present the results for the total sample, as we did for the Spring 2003 through Spring 2006 surveys and for both surveys in 2001. For summary results reporting trends, we have included three averages for the Spring 2002 survey: that for all respondents; that for the cross-sectional sample; and that for the panel sample. However, it is our opinion that the best comparison here is the with the 2002 “cross-sectional” sample (the middle result reported), and it is this figure we use in commenting upon trends below.

Ratings of specific aspects of highways and bridges

We asked respondents to rate nine aspects under the category of Maintaining Highways and Traffic Flow, another ten aspects under the category of Road Repair and Construction (nine of which are continuing aspects from earlier surveys), and five aspects under the category of Traveler Services.

Generally speaking, we find a great deal of consistency between the most recent Spring 2007 findings and results in the past four years (back to the Spring 2003 survey) with regard to the order of aspects within each major category. Differences in rank order generally occur only for those aspects rated very similar to each other.

Overall, the Spring 2007 mean ratings on the 1-to-5 point rating scale do not differ a great deal from the Spring 2006 mean ratings. The largest changes are found for: snow and ice removal (-.11, with a 4% pt decline in excellent/good ratings); timeliness of repairs on interstate highways (-.10, with a 4% pt decline in excellent/good ratings and a 4% pt increase in poor/very poor ratings); and timeliness of repairs on non-interstate highways (-.08, with a 2% pt decline in excellent/good ratings and a 4% pt increase in poor/very poor ratings).

Within this context of little change, we generally find a mixture of small increases, small decreases and no change in mean ratings for most of the items under Maintaining Highways and Traffic Flow (the exception being snow and ice removal mentioned above). For the items under Road Repair and Construction, we find decreases for eight of the nine items, with the two largest being the timeliness of repair items mentioned above. This is in contrast to the 2005-to-2006 comparisons, where all but one item showed an increase in mean scores. For the items under Traveler Services, we find no change or very small increases in mean rating scores.

The following summarizes these results in more detail. Summary highlights of the results for the 2007 respondents are found within the text. Tables having more detail for the 2007 results and trends for all rating aspects follow after the summary text.

Maintaining highways and traffic flow

Using the 2007 findings, the nine aspects can be ordered into the following general five tiers. Presented below are: the rank order (based on mean score); the aspect; the percent giving an “excellent” rating; the percent giving an “excellent” or “good” rating; and the mean rating. (Also see Table 3A.)

	Excel- lent	Excellent or Good	Mean
<i>Tier One</i>			
1. Traffic signs	20%	75%	3.90
2. Electronic message boards to advise of delays or construction areas	20%	73%	3.87
<i>Tier two</i>			
3. Snow and ice removal	15%	70%	3.75
<i>Tier Three</i>			
4. Visibility of lane / shoulder markings	13%	62%	3.64
<i>Tier Four</i>			
5. Cleanliness of roadsides	8%	57%	3.54
6. Landscaping and overall appearance	8%	56%	3.54
7. Timely removal of debris and dead animals	7%	53%	3.44
<i>Tier Five</i>			
8. Roadside lighting and reflectors	7%	48%	3.41
9. Timing of traffic signals	7%	49%	3.38

The order of the aspects in 2007 is very similar to that in 2006, with the only change being the reversal of the items in sixth and seventh positions. “Landscaping and overall appearance” is 6th this year and was 7th last year while “timely removal of debris and dead animals” is 7th this year and was 6th last year. Both are in the same tier of items.

When comparing 2007 mean ratings to those in 2006, we find: three aspects where we see an increase in the mean ratings (with two of the three being very small increases of +.02 and +.03); two aspects with no change; and four aspects where we see a decline in mean ratings (with two of the four being very small decreases of -.01 and -.02). (See Table 3B.)

The largest change occurred for “snow and ice removal,” an item which shows a decrease of -.11, from 3.86 to 3.73 (and a decline of 4% pts in excellent or good ratings). This decrease actually dropped this item out of Tier One. It is very possible that this decrease is at least partly due to the fact that the Spring 2007 questionnaires were distributed later in the Spring than was the case for the other Spring surveys. [This possibility is suggested by the fact that the only other drop of this magnitude for this item occurred between the Spring 2001 survey and its Fall 2001 counterpart (3.82 to 3.72).] Of course, the amount of snow that occurred later in the Winter season would also be a factor that should be taken into account.

The only other item that shows a decrease that is at all sizeable is “timely removal of debris and dead animals” (-.06, 3.50 to 3.44, with a decline of 3% pts in excellent or good ratings). For this item, the 2007 mean rating is on approximate par with the mean ratings it received in the 2001 and 2002 surveys and lower than the ratings found in 2003 through 2006. The only item that shows an increase that is at all sizeable is “landscaping and overall appearance of roadsides and medians” (+.05, 3.49 to 3.54, with an increase of 2% pts in excellent/good ratings). This item’s 2007 rating equals its highest mean rating (in 2005). (These two items, it will be remembered, are the two items that changed ranking positions from one year ago.)

Road repair and construction

Using the 2007 findings, the ten aspects can be ordered into the following general five tiers. Presented below are: the rank order (based on mean score); the aspect; the percent giving an “excellent” rating; the percent giving an “excellent” or “good” rating; and the mean rating. (Also see Table 4A.)

	Excel- lent	Excellent or Good	Mean
<i>Tier One</i>			
1. Warning signs when workers present	19%	77%	3.91
<i>Tier Two</i>			
2. Workzone signs to direct merging traffic and alert motorists to reduce speed	12%	61%	3.61
<i>Tier Three</i>			
3. Advance information about future construction projects through informational highway signs*	10%	51%	3.46
4. Advance information about construction projects through tv, radio, newspapers, Internet	11%	49%	3.43
5. Signs about alternative routes when construction	9%	47%	3.39
<i>Tier Four</i>			
6. Ride quality / smoothness on interstates	5%	40%	3.22
<i>Tier Five</i>			
7. The flow of traffic through workzones	4%	33%	3.07
8. Ride quality / smoothness on non-interstates	2%	30%	3.02
9. Timeliness of repairs on interstates	3%	31%	3.00
10. Timeliness of repairs on non-interstates	2%	26%	2.92

*Not asked in earlier years

The order of these aspects in 2007 is very similar to that found in 2006, with only one exception. The exception is the reversal in rank order for “ride quality / smoothness on non-interstates” and “timeliness of repairs on interstates,” two items within the same tier.

And, of course, the item “advance information about future construction projects through informational highway signs” was not asked in earlier surveys.

A comparison of the mean rating scores in 2007 to those in 2006 finds decreases in the mean scores for eight of the nine continuing items (although one item here decreases by only -.01). This is in contrast to the 2005-to-2006 comparisons, where all but one item experienced mean score increases.

The two largest decreases in mean ratings occur for the two items regarding “timeliness of repairs”: for repairs “on interstate highways” (-.10, with a 4% pt decline in excellent/good ratings and a 4% pt increase in poor/very poor ratings) -- and for repairs “on non-interstate highways” (-.08, with a 2% pt decline in excellent/good ratings and a 4% pt increase in poor/very poor ratings). For both items, only the first Spring 2001 survey shows a lower mean rating.

Three items show smaller declines of -.06, two of them regarding “ride quality and smoothness of pavement.” The “interstate” item here declined from 3.28 to 3.22 (with a 5% pt decline in excellent/good ratings and a 3% pt increase in poor/very poor ratings). The 2007 mean rating here tied with the 2005 survey for being second lowest, with only the Spring 2001 mean rating of 3.08 being lower. The “non-interstate highways” item here declined from 3.08 to 3.02 (with a 2% pt decline in excellent/good ratings and a 4% pt increase in poor/very poor ratings). This was this item’s second lowest rating, again next to the Spring 2001 mean rating of 2.89.

The other item that shows a decline of -.06 (with a decline of 9% pts in excellent/good ratings) is “advance information about construction and repair projects to the public through tv, radio and newspapers.” But, because this item had experienced the largest increase from 2005 to 2006 (3.36 to 3.57, with a 10% pt increase in excellent/good ratings), the 2007 mean rating of 3.43 is still the second most favorable rating received by this item (slightly ahead of several other years). It should be noted that the new item, “advance information about construction and repair projects to the public through informational signs on highways” received just a slightly more favorable mean rating than the continuing advance information item (3.46 vs. 3.43).

Even smaller declines of -.04 are found for: “work zone signs to direct merging traffic and alert motorists to reduce speed” (3.65 to 3.61); and “the flow of traffic through work zones” (3.11 to 3.07). For both of these work zone items, there is actually substantial stability in the mean ratings going back to at least the Spring 2002 survey, with their 2006 mean scores the highest in recent years. The other work zone item – “warning signs when workers are present” – was virtually stable, with a decline of only -.01, and still was the item that received the most favorable ratings.

The only item showing an increase, albeit a small one of +.04, is “signs about alternative routes,” increasing from 3.35 to 3.39, the most favorable mean score received by this item across the survey years.

Traveler services

Using the 2007 findings, the five aspects can be ordered into the following general three tiers. Presented below are: the rank order (based on mean score); the aspect; the percent giving an “excellent” rating; the percent giving an “excellent” or “good” rating; and the mean rating. (Also see Table 5A.)

	Excel- lent	Excellent or Good	Mean
<i>Tier One</i>			
1. Informational signs at highway exits for food, gas, and lodging	23%	82%	4.03
<i>Tier Two</i>			
2. Informational signs about tourist attractions and state parks	18%	71%	3.84
3. Cleanliness of rest areas	16%	70%	3.77
4. Safety of rest areas	13%	66%	3.70
<i>Tier Three</i>			
5. Availability of free IDOT maps	14%	51%	3.39

The order of these aspects is the same as that found in the last four years.¹³

An examination of the 2006 to 2007 changes shows three of the items having no change or an increase of only +.01 (the two items regarding highway signs and the item about “availability of free IDOT road maps”) and the other two items, both relating to rest areas, having very small increases of +.02 and +.03. (See Table 5B.) It should be noted that these follow 2005-to-2006 changes which showed small decreases for all items, ranging from -.03 to -.06.

The following summarizes the trends in mean rating scores across the survey years for these items.

For “informational signs at highway exits for food, gas and lodging,” there is a great deal of stability across all survey years, ranging only from a low of 4.02 to a high of 4.07, with the most recent mean score being toward the lower end of this range.

For “informational highway signs about area tourist attractions and state parks,” there also is a great deal of stability across all survey years, ranging from a low of 3.83 to a high of 3.89, with the most recent mean score being toward the lower end of this range.

For “cleanliness of rest areas for highway motorists,” mean scores range from a low of 3.71 in Spring 2001 to a high of 3.85 in Spring 2002. The most recent mean score of 3.77 is about mid-way in this range and is about on par with scores in three other years. It is a small increase from the mean score of 2006 and a small decrease from the mean score of 2005.

¹³ Only the Spring 2002 survey shows a slight departure in this order, and this is dependent upon which sample is examined.

For “safety of rest areas for highway motorists,” the lowest mean score of 3.58, received in Spring 2001, is the outlier, with the remaining mean scores only ranging from a low of 3.67 to a high of 3.74. The most recent score of 3.70 is about mid-way in this latter group.

For “availability of free IDOT road maps,” the lowest mean score of 3.24 is found in Spring 2001 followed by an increase to 3.34 or 3.35 in the next three surveys (Fall 2001 through Spring 2003). In turn, this was followed by another increase to scores of 3.42 (2004 and 2005) and 3.39 (2006 and 2007) in the most recent four surveys.

Average composite ratings for each general area

For each of the three general areas, we calculated an average composite rating. In 2007, the composite mean ratings for all three general areas fall between the alternatives of “good” (when coded as 4) and “fair” (when coded as 3). The most positive average scores are found for Traveler Services (mean = 3.77; median = 4.00) followed by the averages for Maintaining Highways and Traffic Flow (mean = 3.61; median = 3.67) and then Road Repair and Construction (mean = 3.30; median = 3.33). [See Table 6A (includes standard deviations and n’s), Table 6B (trend data in a form more consistent with other tables), and Table 6C (summarizes survey-to-survey changes).]

For the composite ratings on items within the area of Maintaining Highways and Traffic Flow, we find a high degree of consistency in average scores from the Fall 2001 survey to the most recent 2007 survey, with mean composite ratings ranging only from 3.60 to 3.63. Across this time span, the median composite rating has been 3.67 in every year. In the first survey of Spring 2001, we found somewhat lower average composite ratings in this area.

For the composite ratings on items within the area of Road Repair and Construction, we find a high degree of consistency in average scores for six of the seven surveys conducted from the Fall 2001 survey to the 2007 survey.¹⁴ For these six surveys, the mean composite rating ranges only from 3.29 to 3.33, and the median composite rating is 3.33 in all years. In the other survey during this time span – that of 2006, we find slightly to somewhat more positive average composite scores (mean = 3.36, median = 3.42). Again, the lowest average composite scores are found for the first Spring 2001 survey (mean and median both = 3.22).

For the composite ratings on items within the area of Traveler Services, we also find a high degree of consistency in average scores from the Fall 2001 survey to the most recent 2007 survey. Across this time span, the mean composite rating ranges only from 3.75 to 3.79 (and is either 3.77 or 3.78 for five of the seven surveys) while the median composite rating is 3.80 for every survey except the most recent (where the mid-point case just makes it into the 4.00 category from the 3.80 category). In this area, the mean composite rating in the first survey of Spring 2001 was somewhat lower than would be the case in years to come, consistent with the other two areas, but the median rating here was on par with those that would occur in future surveys.

¹⁴ In calculating the composite score for 2007, only the 9 continuing items were used.

Table 3A
Ratings on Aspects relating to
Maintaining Highways and Traffic Flow

Aspect rated^a	Excellent (5)^b	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	<i>n</i> (% of sample)	<i>mean</i>
5. Traffic signs (for example, directional signs, warning signs, miles to destination signs)	20%	55%	20%	4%	1%	1386 (98%)	3.90
6. Electronic message boards to advise drivers of delays or construction areas	20%	53%	21%	4%	1%	1342 (95%)	3.87
4. Snow and ice removal	15%	54%	23%	5%	2%	1362 (96%)	3.75
7. Visibility of lane and shoulder markings on highways	13%	49%	30%	7%	2%	1383 (98%)	3.64
1. Cleanliness of roadsides, absence of litter	8%	49%	34%	7%	2%	1391 (98%)	3.54
3. Landscaping and overall appearance of roadsides and medians	8%	47%	36%	7%	2%	1387 (98%)	3.54
2. Timely removal of debris and dead animals from pavement	7%	46%	35%	8%	4%	1341 (95%)	3.44
9. Roadside lighting and reflectors for visibility after dark and in bad weather	7%	41%	39%	11%	2%	1359 (96%)	3.41
8. Timing of traffic signals to maintain flow of traffic	7%	42%	38%	10%	4%	1347 (95%)	3.38

^aThe items are ordered by mean rating, from most positive to least positive. The numbers next to the items indicate the order that they appeared in the questionnaire.

^bThe actual scale in the questionnaire is reversed. However, we have recoded the scale so that the higher score represents a more positive rating.

Table 3B
Mean Ratings on Aspects relating to Maintaining Highways and Traffic Flow:
Trends Across Surveys

Aspect rated	Spring 2001 means (n)	Fall 2001 Means (n)	Spring 2002 Means T: Total M: Cross B: Panel	Spring 2003 means (n)	Spring 2004 means (n)	Spring 2005 means (n)	Spring 2006 means (n)	Spring 2007 means (n)
5. Traffic signs (for example, directional signs, warning signs, miles to destination signs)	3.86 (1379)	3.89 (1236)	3.92 3.93 3.90	3.90 (1399)	3.94 (1307)	3.91 (1310)	3.91 (1304)	3.90 (1386)
6. Electronic message boards to advise drivers of delays or construction areas	3.70 (1323)	3.81 (1199)	3.79 3.75 3.82	3.70 (1322)	3.79 (1234)	3.80 (1244)	3.87 (1241)	3.87 (1342)
4. Snow and ice removal	3.82 (1363)	3.72 (1222)	3.93 3.89 3.99	3.95 (1400)	3.96 (1302)	3.91 (1326)	3.86 (1300)	3.75 (1362)
7. Visibility of lane and shoulder markings on highways	3.57 (1372)	3.69 (1229)	3.67 3.67 3.67	3.61 (1399)	3.68 (1308)	3.59 (1305)	3.61 (1303)	3.64 (1383)
1. Cleanliness of roadsides, absence of litter	3.36 (1384)	3.56 (1242)	3.50 3.45 3.55	3.52 (1407)	3.47 (1314)	3.52 (1297)	3.52 (1308)	3.54 (1391)
3. Landscaping and overall appearance of roadsides and medians	3.43 (1377)	3.52 (1231)	3.53 3.48 3.58	3.53 (1399)	3.52 (1305)	3.54 (1301)	3.49 (1303)	3.54 (1387)
2. Timely removal of debris and dead animals from pavement	3.43 (1342)	3.46 (1207)	3.50 3.46 3.54	3.56 (1363)	3.50 (1277)	3.51 (1267)	3.50 (1252)	3.44 (1341)

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Table 3B. (continued)
Ratings on Aspects relating to
Maintaining Highways and Traffic Flow

Aspect rated	Spring 2001 means (n)	Fall 2001 Means (n)	Spring 2002 Means T: Total M: Cross B: Panel	Spring 2003 means (n)	Spring 2004 means (n)	Spring 2005 means (n)	Spring 2006 means (n)	Spring 2007 means (n)
9. Roadside lighting and reflectors for visibility after dark and in bad weather	3.33 (1352)	3.41 (1203)	3.44 3.42 3.46	3.39 (1363)	3.43 (1291)	3.39 (1273)	3.41 (1277)	3.41 (1359)
8. Timing of traffic signals to maintain flow of traffic	3.33 (1347)	3.37 (1212)	3.44 3.41 3.48	3.42 (1387)	3.44 (1291)	3.35 (1283)	3.40 (1273)	3.38 (1347)

Table 4A
Ratings on Aspects relating to
Road Repair and Construction

Aspect rated^a	Excellent (5)^b	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	<i>n</i> (% of sample)	<i>mean</i>
7. Warning signs when workers are present	19%	58%	19%	3%	1%	1383 (98%)	3.91
6. Workzone signs to direct merging traffic and alert motorists to reduce speed	12%	49%	31%	6%	2%	1334 (98%)	3.61
*10. Advance information about construction and repair projects to the public through informational signs on highways	10%	42%	37%	10%	3%	1314 (93%)	3.46
9. Advance information about construction and repair projects to the public through tv, radio, and newspapers	11%	39%	36%	12%	2%	1299 (92%)	3.43
8. Signs about alternative routes when there is construction	9%	38%	38%	11%	3%	1344 (95%)	3.39
3. Ride quality and smoothness of pavement on interstates	5%	35%	41%	15%	4%	1363 (96%)	3.22
5. The flow of traffic through workzones	4%	29%	44%	17%	6%	1374 (97%)	3.07
4. Ride quality and smoothness on non-interstate highways	2%	28%	45%	19%	6%	1337 (95%)	3.02
1. Timeliness of repairs on interstate highways	3%	28%	43%	19%	7%	1316 (93%)	3.00
2. Timeliness of repairs on non-interstate highways	2%	24%	44%	22%	7%	1291 (91%)	2.92

^aThe items are ordered by mean rating, from most positive to least positive. The numbers next to the items indicate the order that they appeared in the questionnaire.

^bThe actual scale in the questionnaire is reversed. However, we have recoded the scale so that the higher score represents a more positive rating.

Table 4B
Mean Ratings on Aspects relating to Road Repair and Construction:
Trends Across Surveys

Aspect rated	Spring 2001 means (n)	Fall 2001 means (n)	Spring 2002 Means T: Total M: Cross B: Panel	Spring 2003 means (n)	Spring 2004 means (n)	Spring 2005 means (n)	Spring 2006 means (n)	Spring 2007 means (n)
7. Warning signs when workers are present	3.81 (1374)	3.89 (1233)	3.82 3.79 3.86	3.89 (1402)	3.86 (1302)	3.89 (1299)	3.92 (1299)	3.91 (1383)
6. Work zone signs to direct merging traffic and alert motorists to reduce speed	3.71 (1378)	3.58 (1231)	3.65 3.63 3.67	3.60 (1392)	3.62 (1302)	3.61 (1300)	3.65 (1300)	3.61 (1381)
10. Advance information about construction and repair projects to the public through informational signs on highways	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	3.46 (1314)
9. Advance information about construction and repair projects to the public through tv, radio, and newspapers	3.41 (1294)	3.39 (1162)	3.40 3.36 3.45	3.42 (1309)	3.42 (1211)	3.36 (1196)	3.57 (1217)	3.43 (1299)
8. Signs about alternative routes when there is construction	3.25 (1328)	3.32 (1200)	3.24 3.23 3.26	3.29 (1373)	3.34 (1260)	3.32 (1261)	3.35 (1267)	3.39 (1344)
3. Ride quality and smoothness of pavement on interstates	3.08 (1358)	3.26 (1207)	3.28 3.27 3.30	3.29 (1380)	3.28 (1289)	3.22 (1287)	3.28 (1275)	3.22 (1363)

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Table 4B. (continued)
Ratings on Aspects relating to Road Repair and Construction:
Trends Across Surveys

Aspect rated	Spring 2001 means (n)	Fall 2001 means (n)	Spring 2002 Means T: Total M: Cross B: Panel	Spring 2003 means (n)	Spring 2004 means (n)	Spring 2005 means (n)	Spring 2006 means (n)	Spring 2007 means (n)
5. The flow of traffic through work zones	2.95 (1372)	2.98 (1221)	3.11 3.05 3.17	3.09 (1378)	3.09 (1299)	3.06 (1279)	3.11 (1278)	3.07 (1374)
4. Ride quality and smoothness on non-interstate highways	2.89 (1342)	3.10 (1188)	3.12 3.10 3.14	3.13 (1369)	3.09 (1272)	3.07 (1265)	3.08 (1256)	3.02 (1337)
1. Timeliness of repairs on interstate highways	2.97 (1322)	3.07 (1171)	3.16 3.12 3.22	3.17 (1337)	3.14 (1227)	3.08 (1238)	3.10 (1225)	3.00 (1316)
2. Timeliness of repairs on non-interstate highways	2.87 (1305)	3.00 (1132)	3.09 3.04 3.15	3.08 (1318)	3.04 (1216)	3.03 (1229)	3.00 (1209)	2.92 (1291)

Table 5A
Ratings on Aspects relating to
Traveler Services

Aspect rated^a Top: Total Middle: Cross-section Bottom: Panel	Excellent (5)^b	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	<i>n</i> (% of sample)	<i>mean</i>
3. Informational signs at highway exits for food, gas, and lodging	23%	60%	15%	2%	0 ⁺ %	1331 (94%)	4.03
4. Informational highway signs about area tourist attractions and state parks	18%	54%	24%	4%	0 ⁺ %	1300 (92%)	3.84
1. Cleanliness of rest areas for highway motorists	16%	54%	22%	6%	2%	1122 (79%)	3.77
2. Safety of rest areas for highway motorists	13%	53%	27%	6%	1%	1067 (75%)	3.70
5. Availability of free IDOT road maps	14%	37%	30%	14%	6%	951 (67%)	3.39

^aThe items are ordered by mean rating, from most positive to least positive. The numbers next to the items indicate the order that they appeared in the questionnaire.

^bThe actual scale in the questionnaire is reversed. However, we have recoded the scale so that the higher score represents a more positive rating.

Table 5B
Mean Ratings on Aspects relating to Traveler Services:
Trends Across Surveys

Aspect rated	Spring 2001 means (n)	Fall 2001 means (n)	Spring 2002 Means T: Total M: Cross B: Panel	Spring 2003 means (n)	Spring 2004 means (n)	Spring 2005 means (n)	Spring 2006 means (n)	Spring 2007 means (n)
3. Informational signs at highway exits for food, gas, and lodging	4.02 (1343)	4.07 (1191)	4.08 4.04 4.13	4.05 (1350)	4.07 (1265)	4.06 (1266)	4.02 (1254)	4.03 (1331)
4. Informational highway signs about area tourist attractions and state parks	3.83 (1303)	3.89 (1159)	3.88 3.83 3.93	3.86 (1320)	3.86 (1223)	3.87 (1240)	3.84 (1219)	3.84 (1300)
1. Cleanliness of rest areas for highway motorists	3.71 (1165)	3.77 (1035)	3.87 3.85 3.89	3.79 (1168)	3.78 (1095)	3.80 (1096)	3.74 (1052)	3.77 (1122)
2. Safety of rest areas for highway motorists	3.58 (1100)	3.67 (983)	3.71 3.70 3.72	3.72 (1118)	3.72 (1021)	3.74 (1037)	3.68 (994)	3.70 (1067)
5. Availability of free IDOT road maps	3.24 (947)	3.34 (847)	3.40 3.35 3.46	3.35 (991)	3.42 (891)	3.42 (908)	3.39 (871)	3.39 (951)

Table 6A
Summary Statistics for Composite Section Ratings

For each of the above three sections, a composite rating was derived by calculating the average score across the items in the section. This was done by summing all relevant ratings and dividing by the total number of items rated in the respective section.

	Median	Mean	Std dev	n
Spring, 2007				
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.67	3.61	0.57	1402
<i>Road repair and construction (1-9)</i>	3.33	3.30	0.65	1397
<i>Traveler services</i>	4.00	3.77	0.67	1352
Spring, 2006				
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.67	3.62	0.57	1318
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	3.42	3.36	0.62	1315
<i>Traveler services</i>	3.80	3.75	0.64	1271
Spring, 2005				
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.67	3.61	0.56	1315
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	3.33	3.30	0.64	1311
<i>Traveler services</i>	3.80	3.79	0.62	1278
Spring, 2004				
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.67	3.63	0.53	1320
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	3.33	3.33	0.61	1318
<i>Traveler services</i>	3.80	3.78	0.65	1280
Spring, 2003				
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.67	3.62	0.53	1418
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	3.33	3.33	0.59	1416
<i>Traveler services</i>	3.80	3.77	0.63	1370
Spring, 2002 <i>Top number: total</i> <i>Middle number: cross-sectional</i> <i>Bottom number: panel</i>				
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.67	3.63*	0.54	1760
	3.67	3.61	0.54	964
	3.67	3.67	0.53	796
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	3.33	3.33*	0.60	1753
	3.33	3.30	0.59	959
	3.38	3.36	0.61	795
<i>Traveler services</i>	4.00	3.80*	0.60	1680
	3.80	3.77	0.61	900
	4.00	3.84	0.60	780
Fall, 2001				
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.67	3.60	0.53	1245
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	3.33	3.29	0.62	1243
<i>Traveler services</i>	3.80	3.77	0.63	1205
Spring, 2001				
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.56	3.54	0.57	1391
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	3.22	3.22	0.60	1389
<i>Traveler services</i>	3.80	3.71	0.65	1359

*indicates the difference between the two Spring 2002 samples is significant at the .01 level.

Table 6B
Average Composite Rating Scores
Across Surveys

Rating Area	Spring 2001	Fall 2001	Spring 2002	Spring 2003	Spring 2004	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Spring 2007
Area	<i>Mean Composite Ratings</i>							
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.54	3.60	3.63 3.61 3.67	3.62	3.63	3.61	3.62	3.61
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	3.22	3.29	3.33 3.30 3.36	3.33	3.33	3.30	3.36	3.30
<i>Traveler services</i>	3.71	3.77	3.80 3.77 3.84	3.77	3.78	3.79	3.75	3.77
Area	<i>Median Composite Ratings</i>							
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	3.56	3.67	3.67 3.67 3.67	3.67	3.67	3.67	3.67	3.67
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	3.22	3.33	3.33 3.33 3.38	3.33	3.33	3.33	3.42	3.33
<i>Traveler services</i>	3.80	3.80	4.00 3.80 4.00	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	4.00

Table 6C
Differences in Summary Composite Section Ratings
Across Surveys

Rating Area <i>(in order, differences between Spring 2002 and Fall 2001 represent: total sample, cross-sectional sample, and panel sample)</i>	Difference: Fall 2001 – Spring 2001	Difference: Spring 2002 – Fall 2001	Difference: Spring 2003 – Spring 2002^a	Difference: Spring 2004 – Spring 2003	Difference: Spring 2005 – Spring 2004	Difference: Spring 2006 – Spring 2005	Difference: Spring 2007 – Spring 2006
Changes in <u>mean</u> composite rating scores							
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	+0.06	+0.03 +0.01 +0.07	+0.01	+0.01	-0.02	+0.01	-0.01
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	+0.07	+0.04 +0.01 +0.07	+0.03	+0.00	-0.03	+0.06	-0.06
<i>Traveler services</i>	+0.06	+0.03 +0.00 +0.07	+0.00	+0.01	+0.01	-0.04	+0.02
Changes in <u>median</u> composite rating scores							
<i>Maintaining highways and traffic flow</i>	+0.09	+0.00 +0.00 +0.00	+0.00	+0.00	+0.00	+0.00	+0.00
<i>Road repair and construction</i>	+0.11	+0.00 +0.00 +0.05	+0.00	+0.00	+0.00	+0.09	-0.09
<i>Traveler services</i>	+0.00	+0.20 +0.00 +0.20	+0.00	+0.00	+0.00	+0.00	+0.20

^a To calculate this difference, the cross-sectional mean (mean in middle position) was used for the Spring 2002 results.

Overall ratings of IDOT and employees

The continuing questions: overall / general ratings and ratings of IDOT employees

Overall job IDOT is doing. In 2007, just over one in twenty (6%) gave IDOT an overall rating of “excellent” while more than half (52%) responded with “good.” Just over one-third (35%) said “fair” while one in twenty (5%) gave a rating of “poor” and very few (2%) gave a “very poor” rating. The average (mean) rating is 3.54. (See the bottom of Table 7A.)

Across the surveys, the mean rating for IDOT’s overall job performance ranges from 3.53 to 3.63. This mean rating showed steady positive increases from 2001 through a plateau of 3.63 reached in both 2003 and 2004. Since then, the mean rating has declined to 3.58 and 3.60 in 2005 and 2006, respectively, and then to 3.54 in the most recent survey, nearly back to the 2001 level of 3.53. (See the bottom of Table 7B.)

General trust. For the third year in a row, respondents were asked, “Generally speaking, how often do you think you can trust IDOT to do what is right regarding transportation issues?” In response to this, more than 70 percent (72%) chose either “just about always” (15%) or “most of the time” (57%). Nearly one-quarter (24%) chose “only some of the time” while just under one in twenty (4%) chose “hardly ever.” (See the bottom of Table 7A.) When the 2007 results are scored so as to be comparable to the earlier surveys, the recent mean rating of 3.81 is slightly more positive than the results for either 2005 or 2006.¹⁵

Ratings of employees. The rank order of the four Employee Performance aspects is the same as that for previous surveys. Again, the most positive rating goes to “courtesy and respect shown to motorists” (mean of 3.88 in 2007; with 74% giving “excellent” or “good”). The next two items have quite similar mean ratings and quite similar percentages giving “excellent” or “good” ratings: “overall conduct on the job” (3.79; 70% giving “excellent” or “good”); and “helpfulness of the information provided” (3.74; 66%). Again, the final aspect is “accessibility of employees” (3.49; 53%). (See Table 7A for 2007 results.)

The 2007 mean ratings for three of these aspects are virtually the same as the means in 2006 (no change or +.01) while a decrease of -.06 in the mean score occurs for “accessibility of employees when you need them.” (See Table 7B.)

Trends across the survey years for these items are summarized below. (See Table 7B.)

For “overall conduct of IDOT employees on the job,” there is a great deal of stability in all mean rating scores except for that of the first survey conducted, with means during

¹⁵ In 2007, the response alternative “never” was not asked as it had been in 2005 and 2006. The “never” alternative had received very few responses in both 2005 and 2006 (about 1%), and eliminating it makes the response alternatives more balanced and more comparable to the “trust question” more usually asked in surveys.

this span of Fall 2001 to 2007 ranging from a low of 3.75 to a high of 3.81. The Spring 2001 mean rating was a lower 3.64.

For “courtesy and respect shown to motorists,” there is a great deal of stability in the mean rating scores over the past five survey years (2003 through 2007), with means ranging from 3.86 to 3.89. In Fall 2001 and 2002, the mean rating was a lower 3.81 and in Spring 2001 it was even lower at 3.66

For “helpfulness of the information provided by employees,” the mean ratings for 2002 and for the last three years (2005 to 2007) are either 3.73 or 3.74. In 2003 and 2004, the mean ratings were a bit higher (3.78 and 3.76) while in Fall 2001, the mean rating was a bit lower (3.70). The Spring 2001 mean rating was the lowest of all at 3.59.

For “accessibility of employees when you need them,” the mean rating score has been either 3.55 or 3.58 for five of the past seven surveys. Both in 2002 (3.46) and in the most recent 2007 survey (3.49), the mean dipped below 3.50. As is the case for the items above, the lowest mean rating of 3.34 occurred in the first survey conducted in Spring 2001.

Table 7A
Ratings of IDOT's Employees on Selected Aspects
and Overall Rating of IDOT Performance

Aspect rated^a	Excellent (5)^b	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	<i>n</i> (% of total)	<i>mean</i>
1. Courtesy and respect shown to motorists	18%	56%	21%	3%	1%	870 (62%)	3.88
4. Overall conduct of IDOT employees on the job	16%	54%	24%	3%	2%	801 (57%)	3.79
3. Helpfulness of the information provided by employees	16%	50%	27%	5%	2%	687 (49%)	3.74
2. Accessibility of employees when you need them	11%	42%	35%	9%	3%	683 (48%)	3.49
Overall performance: How would you rate THE OVERALL JOB the Illinois Dept of Transportation is doing?	6%	52%	35%	5%	2%	1308 (92%)	3.54
General trust:	Just about always (4)	Most of the time (3)	Only some of the time (2)	Hardly ever (1)	Never (not asked in 2007)	<i>n</i> (% of total)	<i>mean</i>
How often trust IDOT to do what is right regarding transportation issues?	15%	57%	24%	4%	---	1020 (72%)	2.81 (3.81) ^c

^a The items are ordered by mean rating, from most positive to least positive. The numbers next to the items indicate the order that they appeared in the questionnaire.

^b The actual scales (for both scales) in the questionnaire is reversed. However, we have recoded the scale so that the higher score represents a more positive rating.

^c In 2007, the response alternative "never" was not asked as it had been in 2005 and 2006. The "never" alternative had received very few responses in both 2005 and 2006 (about 1%), and eliminating it makes the response alternatives more balanced and more comparable to the "trust question" more usually asked in surveys. If the 1-to-4 scale in 2007 is scored on a 2-to-5 scale (thus more comparable to the 2005 and 2007 results), the mean becomes 3.81.

Table 7B
Mean Ratings of IDOT's Employees on Selected Aspects
and Overall Rating of IDOT Performance:
Trends Across Surveys

Aspect rated	Spring 2001 means (n)	Fall 2001 means (n)	Spring 2002 Means T: Total M: Cross B: Panel	Spring 2003 means (n)	Spring 2004 means (n)	Spring 2005 means (n)	Spring 2006 means (n)	Spring 2007 means (n)
1. Courtesy and respect shown to motorists	3.66 (640)	3.81 (612)	3.86 3.81 3.92	3.89 (887)	3.89 (819)	3.86 (804)	3.87 (802)	3.88 (870)
4. Overall conduct of IDOT employees on the job	3.64 (598)	3.79 (554)	3.82 3.76 3.88	3.81 (818)	3.79 (744)	3.75 (740)	3.78 (730)	3.79 (801)
3. Helpfulness of the information provided by employees	3.59 (507)	3.70 (456)	3.78 3.73 3.84	3.78 (713)	3.76 (621)	3.73 (651)	3.74 (623)	3.74 (687)
2. Accessibility of employees when you need them	3.34 (485)	3.55 (447)	3.52 3.46 3.60	3.58 (687)	3.58 (588)	3.55 (622)	3.55 (611)	3.49 (683)
How would you rate THE OVERALL JOB the Illinois Dept of Transportation is doing?	3.53 (1271)	3.56 (1157)	3.63 3.59 3.68	3.63 (1361)	3.63 (1249)	3.58 (1260)	3.60 (1265)	3.54 (1308)
How frequently do you trust IDOT to do what is right regarding transportation issues?	----	----	----	----	----	3.78 (918)	3.75 (1026)	3.81 [2.81*] (1020)

*See footnote c in Table 7A. The "never" alternative was not asked in the 2007 survey.

Assessed importance of IDOT for area

Respondents were asked “how important [they] think IDOT is for [their] area’s economy” and “for [their] area’s overall quality of life.” The same questions were asked in the 2005 survey. (See Table 8.)

In 2007, just over eight in ten (82%) responded that IDOT was either “very important” (44%) or “important” (38%) for their area’s economy while 13 percent said it was “somewhat important” and one in twenty (5%) said it was either “not very” (4%) or “not at all important” (1%). The distribution for assessed importance on the area’s overall quality of life is very similar, with the basic difference being somewhat fewer indicating IDOT is “very important” (40% vs. 44% for the economy). Consistent with this, the mean rating for IDOT’s importance on the area’s economy is only slightly greater than that for IDOT’s importance for the overall quality of life (4.20 vs. 4.17).

When compared to the 2005 results, we find more 2007 respondents indicating IDOT is “very important” (44% vs. 32% for economy and 40% vs. 33% for overall quality of life) and fewer 2007 respondents indicating IDOT is “important” (38% vs. 46% for economy and 48% vs. 41% for overall quality of life). For the economy question, we also find somewhat fewer 2007 respondents indicating that IDOT is “somewhat important” (13% vs. 18%).

Table 8
Assessed Importance of IDOT for Area

IDOT’s importance for ...	Very Important (5) *	Important (4)	Somewhat important (3)	Not very important (2)	Not at all important (1)	<i>n</i> (% of total)	<i>mean</i>
Area’s economy							
2007	44%	38%	13%	4%	1%	1234 (87%)	4.20
2005	32%	46%	18%	3%	1%	1144 (86%)	4.06
Area’s overall quality of life							
2007	40%	41%	15%	3%	0+%	1170 (83%)	4.17
2005	33%	48%	16%	3%	0+%	1153 (87%)	4.10

*These values have been reversed from those in the questionnaire so that higher scores represent greater satisfaction.

Awareness and use of toll-free telephone number and website

Toll-free telephone number. Just over two-thirds (68%) of the respondents indicated not being aware of IDOT's toll-free number to get information on road conditions. Just under one-quarter (24%) are aware of it but have never called it while the remaining 9 percent said they had called it, 3 percent having done so in the past year. The results are very similar across the past four years. (See Table 9, top portion.)

Website. Over two-thirds (69%) of the respondents indicated not being aware of IDOT's website that contains information on construction zones and road conditions. Just over one in five (21%) are aware of it but have never visited it while the remaining 11 percent said they have visited it. While the 2007 results did not show a second consecutive increase in awareness of the website, as might have been expected, the results across the five-year span shows a general increase in the percent who indicate they have visited the website – from about 5 or 6 percent in 2003 and 2004, to 8 or 9 percent in 2005 and 2006, and to 11 percent in the most recent 2007 survey. (See Table 9, bottom portion.)

Table 9
Awareness and Use of IDOT Toll-Free Number and Internet Site

Topic	Spring 2003	Spring 2004	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Spring 2007
Aware of toll-free number to get info on road conditions? And have you called this number?					
NOT aware	68%	69%	69%	68%	68%
Aware but never called	24%	23%	24%	26%	24%
Called, but not in last 12 months	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%
Called in last 12 months	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%
<i>Number of respondents</i>	1353 (95%)	1260 (94%)	1254 (95%)	1252 (95%)	1318 (93%)
Aware of website to get info on construction zones and road conditions? And ever visited site to get this info?					
NOT aware of website	77%	77%	71%	67%	69%
Aware but never visited	17%	18%	21%	23%	21%
To website but not for this info	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Looked at this info on website	4%	4%	6%	7%	8%
<i>Number of respondents</i>	1344 (94%)	1246 (94%)	1239 (93%)	1232 (93%)	1284 (91%)

Topical questions

As noted earlier, this year's topical issue questions included: ratings on selected characteristics, considering "tax dollars spent" (page 3); satisfaction with selected highway-related services (page 3); priorities regarding transportation improvements (page 3); perceptions of traffic congestion on IDOT-maintained highways/roads in respondents' area (page 3); evaluations of ways to deal with congestion (page 4); and assessments of the influence various sources have on the respondents' overall of IDOT (page 4).

Ratings on four characteristics, "for tax dollars spent"

Respondents were asked to rate IDOT on four characteristics, "for the tax dollars that are spent." The characteristics are: overall amount of service provided; overall quality of work; overall professionalism; and miles of roads improved and built statewide in 2006. All but the last item were also asked in the 2005 survey. The results are reported in Table 10.

Table 10
Evaluations of Aspects of IDOT,
"For the tax dollars that are spent,"
2007 and 2005

Aspect rated^a	Excellent (5)^b	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	<i>n</i> (% of sample)	<i>mean</i>
2007							
C. Overall professionalism	8%	48%	36%	5%	2%	1034 (73%)	3.55
B. Overall quality of work	6%	45%	39%	7%	2%	1184 (84%)	3.47
A. Overall amount of service provided	5%	45%	37%	10%	3%	1155 (82%)	3.39
D. Miles of roads improved and built statewide in 2006	6%	35%	38%	16%	5%	1057 (75%)	3.22
2005							
C. Overall professionalism	8%	50%	35%	5%	2%	921 (70%)	3.57
B. Overall quality of work	6%	49%	35%	8%	2%	1122 (85%)	3.48
A. Overall amount of service provided	5%	47%	39%	7%	2%	1104 (83%)	3.46
Miles of roads improved and built ...	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

In these questions, the 2007 respondents rated IDOT most favorably on “overall professionalism” [53% “excellent” or “good” (E/G); 7% “poor” or “very poor” (P/VP); mean = 3.55] -- followed quite closely by “overall quality of work” [51% (E/G); 9% (P/VP); 3.47] -- and then by “overall amount of service provided” [50% (E/G); 13% (P/VP); 3.39]. Rated least favorably is “miles of roads improved and built statewide in 2006” [41% (E/G); 21% (P/VP); 3.22].

Altogether, the 2005 results do not depart much at all from those in 2007. For the 2005 survey, “overall professionalism” was also rated most favorably, with results very close to 2007. And, consistent with 2007, “overall quality of work” was rated next, with a mean rating just slightly higher than that in 2007. The 2005 mean rating for “overall amount of service provided” is somewhat more positive than that in 2007 – and in 2005, had a mean rating closer to “overall quality of work.” This is largely because of the somewhat larger percent giving a “poor” or “very poor” rating in 2007 (13% in 2007 vs. 9% in 2005).

Satisfaction with selected transportation-related services

Respondents were asked about their degree of satisfaction with nine selected transportation-related services in the 2007 survey. Six of these services had been asked with the same or virtually the same wording in the 2004 survey. One 2004 item, that having to do with maintaining existing highways and bridges, was divided into two items, one relating to highways and the other relating to bridges. And, a new item was added relating to providing “real time” information service to drivers on the road. (See page 3 of the questionnaire.)

Using the 2007 findings, the nine aspects can be ordered into the general five tiers presented on the next page. Presented here are: the rank order (based on mean score); the service; the percent who are “very satisfied”; the percent who are either “very” or “somewhat satisfied” (Total Satisf); the percent who are either “somewhat” or “very dissatisfied” (Total Dissat); and the mean rating. (Also see Table 11.)

Services in the top two tiers of satisfaction both relate to adding lanes to four-lane, restricted access highways (freeways and tollways). Half of the respondents are satisfied with the freeway item while a somewhat lower 43 percent are satisfied with the tollway item, thus differentiating the two. Slightly less than one in twenty are dissatisfied with each of these items.

Services in the third tier all receive satisfaction ratings from 40 to 44 percent of the respondents and dissatisfaction responses from 20 to 25 percent. Included here are items that relate to: providing more/better “real time” information; widening lanes and adding new lanes to existing state roads and bridges as well as constructing new state roads and bridges; and maintaining existing bridges. (It should be noted that nearly all surveys had been returned prior to the collapse of the bridge in Minneapolis / St. Paul.)

The two services in the two bottom tiers each received dissatisfaction responses from 30 to 32 percent of the respondents. What differentiates these two services is the fact

that maintaining existing highways received satisfaction responses from 46 percent while public transportation options received satisfaction from a lower 37 percent.

	Very Satisf	Total Satisf	Total Dissat	Mean
<i>Tier One</i>				
1. Adding needed lanes to freeways	12%	50%	19%	3.37
<i>Tier Two</i>				
2. Adding needed lanes to tollways	10%	44%	18%	3.31
<i>Tier Three</i>				
3. Providing more / better traffic information to drivers while they are on the road ("real time" info)	9%	44%	20%	3.28
4. Widening lanes on other existing state roads and bridges	8%	44%	23%	3.23
5. Adding needed lanes on other state roads and bridges	7%	43%	21%	3.23
6. Maintain, repair, repave existing bridges	8%	46%	25%	3.22
7. Construction of new states roads and bridges	9%	40%	21%	3.20
<i>Tier Four</i>				
8. Maintain, repair, repave existing highways	7%	46%	31%	3.14
<i>Tier Five</i>				
9. Public transportation options	10%	37%	30%	3.05

For the six items which continued from 2004 to 2007, the largest change occurs for the public transportation options service, where the mean rating declined by -.14. Viewing the percentage distributions for this item, we find that the percent giving satisfied responses declined somewhat from 40 to 37 percent as did the proportion giving a neutral response (35% to 32%). At the same time, those giving a dissatisfied response increased from 25 to 30 percent. (See Table 11, Rank 9 item.)

For the other five continuing items, we find smaller decreases in the mean ratings for four of them (-.03 to -.07) and a small increase in the mean rating for the other (+.03). (See Table 11, items with Ranks of 1, 4, 5, and 7.)

The 2007 item about maintaining existing state highways received a mean rating equivalent to that of the 2004 rating for maintaining state roads and bridges, albeit with small changes in the percentage distribution across responses. (See Table 11, Rank 8 item.) The 2007 items about maintaining existing state bridges received a slightly more positive mean rating (3.20). (See Table 11, Rank 6 item.) A closer examination finds that the 2007 bridge maintenance item received more neutral ratings than did the 2007 highway maintenance item (30% vs. 22%) while also receiving fewer dissatisfied responses (25% vs. 32%) as well as satisfied responses (43% vs. 46%).

Table 11
Degree of Satisfaction with Selected
Transportation-related Services, 2007 and 2004

Transportation Service rated*		Very Satisfied (5)**	Some-what Satisfied (4)	Neutral (3)	Some-what DISSatisfied (2)	Very DISSatisfied (1)	<i>n</i> (% of total)	<i>mean</i>
Rank = 1								
1. Adding needed lanes to freeways	2007	12%	38%	31%	13%	6%	1241 (88%)	3.37
	2004	12%	40%	32%	12%	4%	1153 (86%)	3.43
Rank = 2								
2. Adding needed lanes to tollways	2007	10%	34%	39%	12%	6%	1083 (76%)	3.31
	2004	10%	32%	40%	12%	6%	1011 (76%)	3.28
Rank = 3								
9. Providing more / better traffic info while on the road	2007	9%	35%	37%	15%	5%	1157 (82%)	3.28
	2004	----	----	----	----	----		----
Rank = 4								
4. Widening lanes on other highways	2007	8%	36%	33%	18%	5%	1234 (87%)	3.23
	2004	10%	35%	34%	17%	4%	1152 (86%)	3.30
Rank = 5								
3. Adding needed lanes on other state roads and bridges	2007	7%	36%	35%	15%	6%	1213 (85%)	3.23
	2004	10%	33%	36%	16%	5%	1129 (85%)	3.26
Rank = 6								
6. Maintain, repair, repave existing bridges (also see #5)	2007	8%	38%	30%	17%	8%	1249 (88%)	3.22
... existing highways and bridges	2004	7%	37%	26%	24%	7%	1226 (92%)	3.14
Rank = 7								
7. Construction of new state roads & bridges	2007	9%	31%	39%	14%	7%	1108 (78%)	3.20
(contd on next page)	2004	9%	33%	40%	12%	6%	1136 (85%)	3.26

**Table 11. Degree of Satisfaction with Selected Transportation Services
(continued)**

Transportation Service rated*		Very Satisfied (5)**	Some-what Satisfied (4)	Neutral (3)	Some-what DISsatisfied (2)	Very DISsatisfied (1)	<i>n</i> (% of total)	<i>mean</i>
Rank = 8								
5. Maintain, repair, repave existing highways (also see #6)	2007	7%	39%	22%	23%	8%	1300 (92%)	3.14
... existing highways and bridges	2004	7%	37%	26%	24%	7%	1226 (92%)	3.14
Rank = 9								
8. Public transportation options	2007	10%	27%	32%	18%	12%	1053 (74%)	3.05
	2004	13%	27%	35%	16%	9%	993 (74%)	3.19

* The numbers next to the items represent the order in which these appeared in the questionnaire.

**These values have been reversed from those in the questionnaire so that higher scores represent greater satisfaction.

Priorities in selected transportation improvements

In the 2007 survey, respondents were asked to assume the role of “the decision-maker” and then were “asked to rank the following kinds of transportation improvements in order of importance.”

1. maintain, repair and repave existing roadways
2. maintain, repair and repave existing bridges
3. replace bridges more than 40 years old
4. widen existing roads and bridges that carry heavy traffic
(by widening and/or adding lanes)
5. construction of new roadways and bridges
6. expansion of public transportation options
(more buses and trains, additional routes, etc.)

Here, respondents were not asked to rank all 6 items, in order of importance. Rather, they were asked to identify the item most important, 2nd most important and 3rd most important. (See page 3 of the questionnaire.) In addition to analyzing the items in terms of the percentage it received for each of these choices, an overall score was calculated for each item – with 3 points given for each “most important” selection, 2 points for each “2nd most important” selection, and 1 point for each “3rd most important” selection.

It should be noted that a similar priority question was asked in the 2004 survey, with five rather than 6 possible improvements. The 2004 item regarding maintaining, repairing and repaving existing roads and bridges was divided into one item for roadways and one item for bridges in the 2007 survey.

The 2007 results, presented in Table 12A, *clearly show that the first priority for these respondents is maintaining, repairing and repaving existing roadways*. Indeed, this improvement received a “most important” selection by nearly half of the respondents; a “most” or “2nd most” important selection by 70 percent; and a choice in the top three by 86 percent.

Clearly in second position in terms of priorities is widening existing roads and bridges that carry heavy traffic. This improvement received a “most important” selection by almost one-quarter (23%); a “most” or “2nd most” important selection by 45 percent; and a choice in the top three by 63 percent.

Two improvements follow next in third and fourth priority positions, with the improvement regarding maintaining, repairing and repaving existing bridges slightly edging out the improvement regarding expanding public transportation options in terms of overall mean score. “Expanding public transportation options” actually receives a greater number of “most important” selections than does “maintaining existing bridges” (14% vs. 4%), but it receives fewer top two choices (24% vs. 28%) and fewer top three choices (39% vs. 48%).

In fifth and sixth priority positions, respectively, are replacing bridges more than 40 years old and constructing new highways and bridges. Slightly to somewhat more respondents chose replacing older bridges than chose constructing new highways and bridges for the “most important” selection (7% vs. 4%), the top two choices (18% vs. 14%), and the top three choices (34% vs. 27%). Again, it should be noted here that nearly all 2007 Motorist surveys had been received before the collapse of the bridge across the Mississippi River in Minneapolis / St. Paul.

The 2004 results are presented in Table 12B. Note that an exact comparison of percentages and scores is not possible because of the greater number of choices in 2007 (i.e., the division of the 2004 item regarding maintaining roads and bridges into two items, one for roads and one for bridges). Nonetheless, it can be seen that the 2004 priorities are generally consistent with those found in 2007 -- with the first priority clearly being maintaining, repairing and repaving existing roads and bridges; the second priority clearly being widening existing roads and bridges that carry heavy traffic; and the last priority being the construction of new highways and bridges.

Results for “expand public transportation options” are actually very similar in both 2004 and 2007, despite the fact that more alternatives were offered in 2007. On the other hand, for every selection analyzed (most important, top two, or top three), slightly to somewhat fewer 2007 than 2004 respondents chose replacing bridges more than 40 years old. Extreme caution should be exercised here, however, not only because of the greater number of choices in 2007 but also because the additional item in 2007 specifically involves bridges (maintaining, repairing and repaving), an item which placed third in priority in 2007 (and actually receives “top two” and “top three” proportions very similar to the 2004 item for replacing bridges).

Table 12A
Priorities of Selected Transportation Improvements, 2007

Transportation Improvement Rated*	Percent Priority #1 (3 pts)	Percent Priority #2 (2 pts)	Percent Priority #1 or 2	Percent Priority #3 (1 pt)	Percent Priority #1, 2, 3	Mean Pts
1. Maintain, repair, repave existing roads	48.7%	21.9%	70.5%	15.0%	85.6%	2.05
4. Widen existing roads / bridges that carry heavy traffic	22.9%	22.2%	45.0%	18.0%	63.0%	1.31
2. Maintain, repair, repave existing bridges	3.7%	24.5%	28.2%	19.7%	48.0%	0.80
6. Expand public transportation options	13.7%	9.9%	23.6%	15.3%	38.9%	0.76
3. Replace bridges more than 40 yrs old	7.2%	10.3%	17.5%	16.3%	33.8%	0.58
5. Construct new highways / bridges	3.9%	10.8%	13.9%	13.4%	27.3%	0.45

*These are based on responses given by 95% of the sample (n =1349). It should also be noted that, among those answering the question, 1% did not give a choice for the second most important priority, and 2% did not give a choice for the third most important priority. The numbers next to the items represent the order in which they appeared in the questionnaire.

Table 12B
Priorities of Selected Transportation Improvements, 2004

Transportation Improvement Rated*	Percent Priority #1 (3 pts)	Percent Priority #2 (2 pts)	Percent Priority #1 or 2	Percent Priority #3 (1 pt)	Percent Priority #1, 2, 3	Mean Pts
(1-2). Maintain, repair, repave existing roads / bridges	51.3%	25.3%	76.6%	15.6%	92.2%	2.20
4. Widen existing roads / bridges that carry heavy traffic	21.8%	31.1%	52.9%	24.8%	77.7%	1.52
3. Replace bridges more than 40 yrs old	9.3%	21.0%	30.3%	19.0%	49.3%	0.89
6. Expand public transportation options	12.4%	11.2%	23.6%	16.9%	40.5%	0.77
5. Construct new highways / bridges	5.0%	9.8%	14.8%	19.7%	34.5%	0.54

*These are based on responses given by 95% of the sample. It should be noted that a couple respondents did not give a clear response to their most important priority, 2% did not for the second most important priority, and 4% did not for the third most important priority. The numbers next to the items represent the order in which they appeared in the questionnaire.

Traffic congestion

In the 2007 questionnaire, respondents were asked two questions regarding traffic congestion in their “area” (see page 3 of questionnaire) and were also asked to rate five possible ways of dealing with traffic congestion on Illinois roadways (see page 4 of questionnaire).

Traffic congestion in area. To measure respondents’ perceptions about traffic congestion on state roads and highways in their area, they were asked the following two questions. An overall index of perceived congestion (high, medium, and low) was constructed from answers to these two questions. (See footnote to Table 13A for the construction of this index.) The same questions were asked in the 2004 survey.

Overall, how congested is traffic on the state roads and highways that IDOT maintains in your area? (Choices offered were: extremely congested; very congested; congested; somewhat congested; only a little congested; and not at all congested. A “don’t know” alternative was also offered.)

On these state roads and highways in your area, how often is traffic either very or extremely congested? (Choices offered were: always; almost always; most of the time; about half the time; some of the time; hardly ever; or never. A “don’t know” alternative was also offered.)

The results, presented in Table 13A, show that more than four in ten 2007 respondents (43%) believe traffic congestion on state roads and highways in their area is either “extremely” (20%) or “very” congested (23%), up from 35 percent in 2004. Just over one-fifth perceive it as “congested” in both 2007 and 2004 (22% and 21%).

And, when asked how often traffic congestion on these roads is either very or extremely congested, we find just over one-fifth (21%) of the 2007 respondents say either “always” (7%) or “almost always” (14%), up from 16 percent in the 2004 survey. Just over one-fifth (22%) of the 2007 respondents say “most of the time,” just slightly higher than the 19 percent who said so in 2004.

Given these results, it is not surprising that when we used the results to categorize respondents into high, medium and low levels of perceived congestion, we find that 34 percent of the 2007 respondents fell into the high level category, compared to 27 percent in 2004. Similar percentages fell into the medium level category (31% for 2007 and 29% for 2004). And, fewer 2007 than 2004 respondents fell into the low level category (36% vs. 44%). Overall, then, 2007 respondents see somewhat more traffic congestion on state roads and highways in their area than was the case in 2004.

Table 13A
Assessed Traffic Congestion, 2007 and 2004

Overall, how congested is traffic on the state roads and highways in your area?	2004	2007
Extremely congested	14%	20%
Very congested	21%	23%
Congested	21%	22%
Somewhat congested	23%	19%
Only a little congested	14%	11%
Not at all congested	7%	5%
<i>n (and percent)</i>	1229 (92%)	1264 (89%)
On state roads and highways in your area, how often is traffic either very or extremely congested?	2004	2007
Always	4%	7%
Almost always	12%	14%
Most of the time	19%	22%
About half the time	18%	20%
Some of the time	30%	24%
Hardly ever	14%	12%
Never	3%	1%
<i>n (and percent)</i>	1232 (92%)	1283 (91%)
From above combined – level of perceived traffic congestion	2004*	2007*
High	27%	34%
Moderate	29%	31%
Low	44%	36%
<i>n (and percent)</i>	1250 (94%)	1309 (92%)

*The 2004 combined index results differ just slightly from that presented in the 2004 report (where the results were reported as high - 28%, moderate - 27% and low - 45%). (Note that the 2004 percentages for each of the two items are the same as those presented in the 2004 report.) We have re-calculated the 2004 data to be consistent with the 2007 index construction for purposes of comparison. For this combined index, a "high level" of congestion was given to respondents who believed that traffic was either "extremely" or "very" congested AND who indicated that traffic was congested "always," "almost always," or "most of the time." (A "high level" was also given to the few respondents who indicated traffic was "extremely" or "very" congested and did not answer the frequency question.) A "medium level" of congestion was given to respondents who believed that traffic is "congested" at least "some of the time"; or who believed that traffic was "extremely" or "very" congested "about half the time" or "some of the time." Other respondents who gave substantive responses were given a "low level" score. Respondents who gave a "don't know" or "no answer" response to both questions were not counted.

Results of the perceived traffic index categories by dichotomized IDOT district (District 1 vs. Districts 2 – 9) and by perceived location of residence are presented in Table 13B. Not surprisingly, we find the perceived level of traffic congestion is much higher for District 1 respondents (50% in high level) than for respondents in Districts 2 through 9 (68% in low level). By perceived location of residence, the largest proportions in the high level of perceived congestion are found for City of Chicago and Chicago suburban respondents (53% and 49%, respectively) while the largest proportions in the low level of perceived congestion are found for respondents in cities/villages/towns under 10,000 and for respondents in “rural areas” (67% and 65%, respectively). Perhaps somewhat surprising is the result that respondents in cities of 20,000 to 75,000 perceive traffic to be more congested than is the case for respondents in “other metro area of more than 75,000” (with the latter alternative coming after locations in the Chicago metro and Metro East). However, it should be remembered that the question topic here related to state roads and highways, not local roads.

Table 13B
Perceived Level of Congestion
by Selected Areas of the State, 2007

	Level of Perceived Traffic Congestion			<i>actual n</i>
	Low	Medium	High	
By District				
District 1	12%	38%	50%	582
Districts 2-9	68%	21%	10%	727
By Perceived Location of Residence				
City of Chicago	9%	38%	53%	100
Chicago suburbs	13%	38%	49%	364
Metro East	46%	34%	20%	41
Other metro area -- more than 75,000	59%	30%	10%	108
Other city -- 20,000 to 75,000	44%	25%	32%	123
Other city/ village/ town – 10,000 to 19,999	50%	29%	21%	121
Other city/village/ town – under 10,000	67%	19%	13%	219
Rural area	65%	19%	16%	171

Evaluations of ways to deal with traffic congestion. Respondents were asked to rate five “possible ways of dealing with congestion on Illinois roadways” by asking them to rate each “as a way of solving the traffic congestion problem(s) in [their] area.” Rating choices offered were: 5. excellent; 4. good; 3. fair; 2. poor; or 1. very poor. A “don’t know” alternative was also provided. The same question was asked in the 2004 survey, with only a very slight change in wording for one of the alternatives.

- A. more use of car pooling
- B. more use of existing commuter rail / buses
- C. more convenient availability of commuter rail / buses
- D. Add lanes to the roadways and bridges
- E. reserving certain lanes for use only by vehicles with 2 or more occupants

The results are presented in Table 14A. Here, we see that “more convenient availability of commuter rail or buses” is, overall, rated as the most preferred way of dealing with traffic congestion – rated as “excellent” by 34 percent and either “excellent” or “good” by 72 percent. This is followed fairly closely by the two alternatives of “more use of existing commuter rail or buses” (29%; 67%) and “add lanes to roadways and bridges” (28%; 65%).

Following in fourth place is “more use of car pooling” (24%; 59%) and then “reserving certain lanes for use only by vehicles with 2 or more occupants” (23%; 48%) as the least preferred option.

The 2004 results (also presented in Table 14A) show the same preferred order of alternatives, but with all options having slightly to somewhat lower overall ratings, perhaps reflecting that traffic congestion is perceived to be greater in 2007. The options that gained the most in terms of “excellent” ratings from 2004 to 2007 are “add lanes to roadways and bridges” (+7% pts, 21% to 28%) and “more convenient availability of commuter rail or buses” (+6% pts, 28% to 34%).

In Table 14B, these results are presented for each of the three categorized levels of perceived traffic congestion on area state roads and highways (by high level, medium level, and low level). Focusing on those respondents for whom traffic congestion is perceived to be the biggest problem – the high level respondents, presented first in this table, we see that the most preferred option is different from above. For these respondents, the option most preferred is “add lanes to roadways and bridges” (44% “excellent”; 77% either “excellent” or “good”), the third most-preferred option among all respondents. And the option least preferred is “more use of car pooling” (25%; 53%), which is next to the last among all respondents. It is also worth noting that “more use of car pooling” is the only option where this high traffic congestion level group does not have a higher mean evaluation rating is the case for all respondents.¹⁶ In other words, for all other options, the high traffic congestion level group has a higher mean evaluation than is the case for respondents as a whole, perhaps reflecting their greater concern with ways of alleviating traffic congestion.

¹⁶ Also of interest is that “more use of car pooling” receives the 2nd highest mean rating among the low traffic congestion level group, behind that of “more convenient availability of commuter rail or buses” and just slightly ahead of “more use of existing commuter rail or buses.”

Table 14A
Ratings on Ways of Dealing with
Congestion on Illinois Roadways, 2007 and 2004

Ways of dealing with congestion on roadways – as a solution this is ...	Excellent (5) ^a	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	<i>n</i> (% of sample)	<i>mean</i>
	2007 Results						
C. More convenient availability of commuter rail or buses (1)	34%	38%	19%	6%	3%	1164 (82%)	3.93
B. More use of existing commuter rail or buses (2)	29%	38%	21%	7%	4%	1184 (84%)	3.82
D. Add lanes to roadways and bridges (3)	28%	37%	24%	8%	4%	1211 (86%)	3.76
A. More use of car pooling (4)	24%	35%	24%	11%	6%	1181 (86%)	3.59
E. Reserving certain lanes for use only by vehicles with 2 or more occupants (5)	23%	25%	22%	16%	13%	1153 (82%)	3.28
	2004 Results						
C. More convenient availability of light rail or buses (1)	28%	39%	19%	9%	4%	1033 (77%)	3.78
B. More use of existing light rail or buses (2)	26%	37%	23%	9%	5%	1051 (79%)	3.70
D. Add lanes to roadways and bridges (3)	21%	38%	28%	8%	4%	1071 (80%)	3.63
A. More use of car pooling (4)	23%	33%	24%	13%	8%	1080 (81%)	3.50
E. Reserving certain lanes for use only by vehicles with 2 or more occupants (5)	22%	23%	20%	18%	17%	1032 (77%)	3.14

^a These values have been reversed from those in the questionnaire so that higher scores represent more positive evaluations. The rank order position is in "()" after the alternative.

Table 14B
Ratings on Ways of Dealing with
Congestion on Illinois Roadways, by Perceived Level of Congestion

Ways of dealing with congestion on roadways – as a solution this is ...	Excellent (5)^a	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	<i>n</i> (% of sample)	<i>mean</i>
	High Level of Congestion						
C. More convenient availability of commuter rail or buses (2)	40%	34%	17%	6%	4%	397 (90%)	4.00
B. More use of existing commuter rail or buses (3)	34%	35%	21%	6%	4%	403 (92%)	3.88
D. Add lanes to roadways and bridges (1)	44%	33%	16%	4%	3%	405 (92%)	4.10
A. More use of car pooling (5)	25%	28%	26%	14%	7%	400 (91%)	3.49
E. Reserving certain lanes for use only by vehicles with 2 or more occupants (4)	31%	25%	23%	14%	7%	390 (89%)	3.58
	Moderate Level of Congestion						
C. More convenient availability of light rail or buses (1)	31%	43%	19%	4%	2%	352 (87%)	3.95
B. More use of existing light rail or buses (2)	29%	43%	20%	5%	3%	357 (88%)	3.90
D. Add lanes to roadways and bridges (3)	25%	38%	25%	8%	3%	371 (92%)	3.75
A. More use of car pooling (4)	22%	38%	25%	10%	6%	366 (91%)	3.61
E. Reserving certain lanes for use only by vehicles with 2 or more occupants (5)	22%	27%	19%	18%	14%	356 (88%)	3.24

^a These values have been reversed from those in the questionnaire so that higher scores represent more positive evaluations. Items have been ordered according to their rank among all respondents. The rank order position for the particular group is in "()" after the item wording.

(Table 14B continued on next page)

Table 14B (continued)
Ratings on Ways of Dealing with
Congestion on Illinois Roadways, by Perceived Level of Congestion

Ways of dealing with congestion on roadways – as a solution this is ...	Excellent (5) ^a	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	<i>n</i> (% of sample)	<i>mean</i>
	Low Level of Congestion						
C. More convenient availability of commuter rail or buses (1)	29%	37%	21%	9%	4%	362 (78%)	3.80
B. More use of existing commuter rail or buses (3)	24%	37%	24%	9%	6%	370 (80%)	3.62
D. Add lanes to roadways and bridges (4)	15%	39%	30%	11%	5%	386 (83%)	3.48
A. More use of car pooling (2)	22%	39%	24%	10%	5%	395 (85%)	3.64
E. Reserving certain lanes for use only by vehicles with 2 or more occupants (5)	14%	25%	24%	19%	18%	356 (77%)	2.98

^a These values have been reversed from those in the questionnaire so that higher scores represent more positive evaluations. Items have been ordered according to their rank among all respondents. The rank order position for the particular group is in “()” after the item wording.

Assessed influences on overall opinion of IDOT

Respondents were asked to assess how much five selected “things that can sometimes influence our opinions” have “influenced [their] overall opinion of IDOT.” Rating choices offered were: 5. a lot; 4. quite a bit; 3. some; 2. a little; or 1. not at all. A “don’t know” alternative was also provided. The same question was asked in the 2005 survey. The five opinion influences respondents were asked to right are:¹⁷

- A. your personal experiences; things you have personally seen
- B. experiences/opinions of friends/relatives
- C. news stories in the media
- D. advertisements in the media
- E. opinions of news commentators / columnists / political and community leaders

The results, presented in Table 15, show that “your personal experiences” is the influence assessed as clearly most influential by respondents, with half saying this influenced their overall opinion of IDOT “a lot” and over three-quarters (78%) saying it

¹⁷ Respondents were also offered an opportunity to identify “other” influences.

influenced their overall opinion either “a lot” or “quite a bit.” In a far distant second is “experiences/opinions of friends/relatives” (10% “a lot”; 38% “a lot” or “quite a bit”).

“News stories in the media” follows next (6%; 29%), and in the last two positions are “advertisements in the media” (4%; 17%) and “opinions of news commentators, columnists, leaders” (3%; 17%).

Also interesting here are *the percentages saying the source influenced their overall opinion “not at all”* -- personal experiences (2%); experiences/opinions of friends and relatives (9%); news stories (10%); advertisements (21%); and opinions of commentators, columnists, leaders (24%) – and *the combined percentages saying the source influenced their overall opinion either “not at all” or “a little”* -- personal experiences (6%); experiences/opinions of friends and relatives (23%); news stories (31%); advertisements (47%); and opinions of commentators, columnists, leaders (51%).

The 2005 results, also presented in Table 15, show the same order of assessed influence for the five potential influences on opinions. However, it is worth noting that the overall distribution of responses as well as mean ratings do not differ much between 2007 and 2005 for the top two sources, those of personal experiences and the experiences/opinions of friends/relatives. But, overall declines in assessed influence are in evidence for each of the bottom three potential sources of influences. For instance, there are declines for each of these in the proportion saying the source has *either “a lot” or “quite a bit” of influence*: news stories (-8% pts, 37% to 29%); advertisements in the media (-5% pts, 22% to 17%); and opinions of commentators, columnists and leaders (-6% pts, 23% to 17%). And, there are increases of generally greater magnitude in the proportion saying the source has influenced their overall opinion *either “a little” or “not at all”*: news stories (+8% pts, 23% to 31%); advertisements in the media (+10% pts, 37% to 47%); and opinions of commentators, columnists and leaders (+11% pts, 40% to 51%). Indeed, for the last two items, the increase in the proportion saying the source influenced their opinion *“not at all”* is worth noting: advertisements in the media (+7% pts, 14% to 21%); and opinions of commentators, columnists and leaders (+9% pts, 15% to 24%).

Table 15
Assessed Influence of Selected Opinion Sources
on Respondent's Opinion of IDOT, 2007 and 2005

Transportation Service rated*	A Lot (5) **	Quite a bit (4)	Some (3)	A little (2)	Not at all (1)	n (% of total)	mean
	2007 Results						
A. your personal experiences	50%	28%	16%	4%	2%	1278 (90%)	4.21
B. experiences / opinions of friends / relatives	10%	28%	40%	14%	9%	1237 (87%)	3.16
C. News stories in the media	6%	23%	40%	21%	10%	1243 (88%)	2.94
D. Advertisements in the media	4%	13%	36%	26%	21%	1208 (85%)	2.53
E. Opinions of news commentators, columnists, leaders	3%	14%	32%	27%	24%	1228 (87%)	2.45
Other***	26%	18%	28%	14%	14%	102 (7%)	3.26
	2005 Results						
A. your personal experiences	46%	32%	18%	3%	1%	1198 (90%)	4.18
B. experiences / opinions of friends / relatives	12%	30%	37%	14%	8%	1159 (87%)	3.24
C. News stories in the media	8%	29%	40%	17%	6%	1175 (89%)	3.17
D. Advertisements in the media	4%	18%	41%	23%	14%	1133 (85%)	2.74
E. Opinions of news commentators, columnists, leaders	5%	18%	38%	25%	15%	1160 (88%)	2.71
Other***	17%	12%	37%	14%	19%	181 (14%)	2.92

* The letters next to the items represent the order in which these appeared in the questionnaire.

**These values have been reversed from those in the questionnaire so that higher scores represent greater assessed influence.

***Note that these actually represent various responses and thus is placed last.